



50 State Quarters Program Concludes as the Most Successful Coin Initiative in U.S. History

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Program Nets Nearly \$3 Billion from Increased Quarter Demand over Decade

WASHINGTON — The United States Mint is wrapping up the 50 State Quarters Program, the national phenomenon that sent Americans searching through their change for the latest quarter to add to their collections. It is estimated that 147 million Americans have been collecting the coins in the 10-year 50 State Quarters Program, which has honored each state in the order it ratified the U.S. Constitution or was admitted into the Union. The program, authorized by Congress, kicked off in early 1999 with the introduction of the Delaware quarter and concludes at the end of 2008 with the Hawaii commemorative quarter-dollar coin.

“This groundbreaking initiative has been the most successful coin program in the Nation’s history,” said United States Mint Director Ed Moy, who participated in the launch ceremony for the Hawaii quarter on November 10, 2008. “The 50 State Quarters Program has educated a generation of Americans about the history and geography of the States. It has also generated tremendous state pride and encouraged citizens to consider which images should symbolize the region where they live.”

Nearly six million free lessons plans about the quarters and the states they celebrate have been downloaded by teachers, parents and students from the United States Mint’s award-winning H.I.P. PocketChange™ web pages for children at <http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/50sq/>.

During the decade of the 50 State Quarters Program, the United States Mint issued more than 34 billion quarters to the Federal Reserve Banks (FRB) and earned \$6.1 billion in seigniorage. The United States Mint estimates that, of the total, the 50 State Quarters Program has generated between \$2.7 and \$2.9 billion. The extra earnings were transferred to the Treasury General Fund. This estimate of additional seigniorage does not include the final figures generated by the quarters honoring Alaska and Hawaii.

The program created extraordinary public interest as thousands of citizens attended the quarter launches, participated in public coin forums hosted by the United States Mint, and lined up for quarter exchanges.

Weather was no deterrent. Temperatures of 103 degrees greeted participants for the June 2, 2008, launch of the Arizona quarter, which was held outside in a tent that helped shield the crowd from the sun. By contrast, the South Dakota quarter was launched amid a snowstorm on November 13, 2006, at the outdoor Mount Rushmore National Memorial Amphitheater.

Citizens also chose to honor their quarters in unique ways, creating an ice sculpture of the design chosen for the New York quarter, a sand castle sculpture for the New Hampshire quarter, and a butter sculpture for the Kansas quarter.

An interesting event involving a quarter launch occurred in the hours just before the ceremony for the introduction of the Alaska quarter on August 29, 2008, when Governor Sarah Palin was suddenly unavailable. Presidential candidate John McCain had selected the Governor as his running mate, and she had flown to Ohio for the announcement the morning of the ceremony. The Lieutenant Governor quickly took her place.

During the program’s 10-year run, the United States Mint shipped 19.4 billion more quarters to the FRB than in the prior 10-year period (34.2 billion for Fiscal Years 1999 through 2008 vs. 14.8 billion for Fiscal Years 1989 through 1998).

The United States Mint facilities at Philadelphia and at Denver each produced roughly half of the total commemorative quarter-dollars minted during the program, with 51% of the quarters manufactured in Philadelphia and 49% of the state quarters manufactured in Denver.

Five quarters were produced annually honoring five states. Each quarter was minted for up to 10 weeks and was never minted again. The program represented the first change to the quarter since production of the Bicentennial Quarter in 1975–1976.

State designs have been displayed on the reverse (tails side) of the quarters, while the obverse (heads side) of the quarters continue to display the familiar image of George Washington. To accommodate designs on the reverse, the words “UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,” “Quarter Dollar,” “Liberty,” and “In God We Trust” all appear on the obverse.

Designs for each quarter were submitted and recommended through a process determined by the Governor of each state. Thousands of citizens often participated in the suggestion and choice of designs. The United States Mint reviewed the designs before each Governor recommended a final design. Both the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee and the Commission of Fine Arts provide comments, and the Department of the Treasury approved all final designs.

In 2009, the United States Mint will embark on the District of Columbia and United States Territories Quarters Program by minting and issuing the six newly designed quarters to honor the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These coins will be issued in equal sequential intervals in 2009 in the order listed. The image of George Washington as seen on the obverse of the 50 State Quarters coins will remain unchanged.

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